THE SPEECHES OF THE LORD [John] DIGBY IN THE HIGH Court of *Parliament*, CONCERNING GRIEVANCES, and the Trienniall PARLIAMENT.

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THE LORD DIGBYES SPEECH,

the 9th of *Novem.* 1640.

Mr. *Speaker,*

YOU have received now a ſolemne accompt from moſt of the Shires of *England*, of the ſeverall grievances and oppreſſions they ſuſtaine, and nothing as yet from *Dorſet-ſhire*; Sir, I would not have you thinke that I ſerve for a Land of *Goſhen*, that we live there in Sunſhine, whileſt darknes and plagues overſpread the reſt of the Land: As little would I have you thinke, that being under the ſame ſharpe meaſure that the reſt, we are either inſenſible and benummed, or that that

Shire wanteth a ſervant to repreſent its ſufferings bouldly.

It is true Mr. *Speaker*, the County of *Dorſet* hath not digeſted its Complaints into that formall way of Petition, which others (I ſee) have done; but have intruſted them to my Partners and my delivery of them by word of mouth unto this Honourable houſe. And there was given unto us in the County Court, the day of our Election, a ſhort memoriall of the heads of them, which was read in the hearing of the Free-holders there preſent, who all unanimouſly with one voyce ſignified upon each particular, that it was their deſire that we ſhould repreſent them to the *Parliament*, which with your leave, I ſhall do, And theſe they are.

1. The great and intollerable burthen of Ship-money, touching the legality whereof they are unſatisfied.

2. The many great abuſes in preſſing of Souldiers, and rayſing Moneys concerning the Same.

3. The multitude of Monopolies.

4. The new Canon, and the Oath to be taken by Lawyers, Divines, &c.

5. The

5. The Oath required to be taken by Church Officers to preſent according to Articles new and unuſuall.

Beſides this, there was likewiſe preſented to us by a very conſiderable part of the Clergie of that County a note of remembrance containing theſe two particulars.

Firſt, the impoſition of a new Oath required to be taken by all Miniſters and others, which they conceive to be illegall, and ſuch as they cannot take with a good Conſcience:

Secondly, the requiring of a pretended Benevolence, but in effect a Subſidy, under the penalty of Suſpenſion, Excommunication, and Deprivation, all benefit of appeale excluded.

This is all we had particularly in Charge: But that I may not appeare a remiſſe ſervant of my Countrey, and of this Houſe; give me leave to adde ſomwhat of my own Senſe.

Truly Mr. *Speaker*, the injurious ſufferings of ſome worthy members of this Houſe, ſince the diſſolution of the two laſt *Parliaments*, are ſo freſh in my memory, that I was reſolved not to open my Mouth, in any buſineſſe wherein freedome and plaine dealing were requiſite, untill ſuch time, as the breach of our priviledges were vindicated, and the ſafety of ſpeech ſetled.

But

But since such excellent Members of our House thought fit the other day to lay aside that Caution, and to discharge their soules so freely in the way of zeale to his Majesties service, and their Countries good: I shall interpret that confidence of theirs for a lucky Omen to this *Parliament*, and with your permission licence my thoughts too, a little.

Mr. *Speaker*, under those heads which I proposed to you, as the grievances of *Dorsetshire*, I suppose are comprised the greatest part of the mischiefs which have of late yeers layed battery either to our Estates, or Consciences.

Sir, I doe not conceive this the fit season to search and ventilate particulars, yet I professe I cannot forbeare to adde somwhat, to what was said the last day by a learned Gentleman of the long Robe, concerning the acts of that reverend new *Synod*, made of an old Convocation. Doth not every *Parliament* mans heart rise to see the Prelats thus usurpe to themselves the Grand Preeminence of *Parliament*? The granting of Subsidies, and that under so prepostrous a name as of a *Benevolence*, for that which is a *Malevolence* indeed; A *Malevolence* I am confident in those that granted it, against *Parliaments*: and a *Malevolence* surely in those that refuse it, against those that granted it: for how can

it

it incite leſſe? when they ſee wreſted from them what they are not willing to part with, under no leſſe a penalty then the loſſe both of Heaven and Earth: of Heaven, by Excommunication; and of the Earth by Deprivation; and this without Redemption by appeale. What good Chriſtian can think with patience on ſuch an inſnaring Oath, as that which is by the new Canons enjoyned to be taken by all Miniſters, Lawyers, Phyſicians, and Graduates in the Univerſities? where, beſides the ſwearing ſuch an impertinence, as that things neceſſary to ſalvation are contained in Diſcipline; beſides the ſwearing thoſe to be of Divine right, which amongſt the learned, never pretended to it, as the Arch things in our Hierarchy. Beſides, the ſwearing not to conſent to the change of that, which the State may upon great reaſon think fit to alter; Beſides the bottomleſſe perjury of an *&c.* Beſides all this Mr. *Speaker*, men muſt ſweare that they ſweare freely and voluntarily what they are compelled unto; and laſtly, that they ſweare that Oath in the literall ſence, whereof no two of the makers themſelves, that I have heard of, could ever agree in the underſtanding.

In a word, Mr. *Speaker*, to tell you my opinion of this Oath, it is a Covenant againſt the King, for Biſhops and the Hierarchie; as

the Scottish Covenants is against them, only so much worse then the Scottish, as they admit not of the Supremacy in Ecclesiasticall Affaires, and we are sworne unto it.

Now Mr. *Speaker*, for those particular heads of grievances whereby our estates and properties are so radically invaded; I suppose, (as I said before) that it is no season now to enter into a strict discussion of them; only thus much I shall say of them, with application to the Countrey for which I serve, that none can more justly complaine, since none can more justly challenge exemption from such burthens then *Dorset-shire*; whether you consider it is a Countrey subsisting much by Trade; or as none of the most populous; or as exposed as much as any to forraigne Invasion.

But alasse Mr. *Speaker*, particular lamentations are hardly distinguishable in universall groanes.

Mr. *Speaker*, it hath bin a Metaphor frequent in *Parliament*, and if my memory faile me not, was made use of in the Lord Keepers Speech at the opening of the last, that what money Kings raised from their Subjects, they were but as vapours drawne up from the Earth by the Sunne, to be distilled upon it

againe in fructifying ſhowers: The Compariſon Mr. *Speaker*, hath held of late yeares in this Kingdome too unluckily: what hath bin rayſed from the Subject by thoſe violent attractions, hath bin formed, it is true, into Clouds, but how? to darken the Sunnes own luſtre, and hath fallen againe upon the Land only in Haylſtones and Milldews, to batter and proſtrate ſtill more and more our liberties, to blaſt and wither our affections; had not the later of theſe bin ſtill kept alive by our Kings owne perſonall vertues, which will ever preſerve him in ſpight of ill Counſellors, a ſacred object, both of our admiration and loves.

Mr. *Speaker*, It hath bin often ſaid in this Houſe, and I think can never be too often repeated, *That the Kings of England can doe no wrong*; but though they could Mr. *Speaker*, yet Princes have no part in the ill of thoſe actions which their Judges aſſure them to be Juſt, their Counſellors that they are Prudent, and their Divines that they are Conſcientious.

This Conſideration Mr. *Speaker*, leadeth me to that which is more neceſſary farre, at this ſeaſon, then any farther laying open of our miſeries, that is, the way to the reme

dy, by seeking to remove from our Soveraigne, such unjust Judges, such pernitious Counsellours, and such disconscient Divines, as have of late yeares, by their wicked practises, provoked aspersions upon the government of the gratiousest and best of Kings.

Mr. *Speaker*, let me not be misunderstood, I levell at no man with a forelayd designe; let the faults and those well proved lead us to the men: It is the only true Parliamentary method, and the only fit one to incline our Soveraigne. For it can no more consist with a gracious and righteous Prince to expose his servants upon irregular prejudices; then with a wise Prince to withhold *Malefactors* how great soever from the Course of orderly Justice.

Let me acquaint you Mr. *Speaker*, with an Aphorisme in *Hippocrates*, no lesse Authentick (I think) in the Body politike, then in the naturall. This it is Mr. *Speaker*, Bodyes to be throughly and effectually purged must have their humours first made fluid and moveable.

The Humours that I understand to have caused all the desperate maladies of this Nation, are the ill Ministers. To purge them away cleerly, they must be first looosened, unsetled, and extenuated, which can no way be effected

effected with a gracious Master, but by truly representing them unworthy of his protection. And this leadeth me to my motion, which is, that a select Comittee may be appointed to draw out of all that hath bin here represented, such a Remonstrance as may be a faithfull and lively representation unto his Majestie of the deplorable estate of this his Kingdome, and such as may happily point out unto his cleere and excellent judgement, the pernitious Authors of it. And that this Remonstrance being drawn, we may with all speed repayre to the Lords, and desire them to joyn with us in it; And this is my humble motion.

THE

THE LORD DIGBYES SPEECH IN THE HOVSE OF Commons, to the Bill for trienniall PARLIAMENTS.

Jan. 19. 1640.

Mr. *Speaker*,

I Riſe not now with an intent to ſpeake to the frame and ſtructure of this Bill, nor much by way of anſwer to objections that may be made; I hope there will bee no occaſion of that, but that we ſhall concurre all unanimouſly in what concerneth all ſo univerſally.

Only Sir, by way of preparation, to the end that we may not be diſcouraged in this great worke

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worke by difficulties that may appeare in the way of it, I ſhall deliver unto you my apprehenſions in generall of the vaſt importance and neceſſity that wee ſhould goe thorow with it.

The Reſult of my ſence is in ſhort this. That unleſſe for the frequent convening of *Parliaments* there be ſome ſuch Courſe ſetled, as may not be eluded; neither the people can be proſperous and ſecure, nor the King himſelfe ſolidly happy. I take this to be the *Unum neceſſarium*: Let us procure this, and all our other deſires will effect themſelves: if this Bill miſcarry, I ſhall have left me no publique hopes, and once paſt, I ſhall bee freed of all publique feares.

The Eſſentialnes Sir of frequent *Parliaments* to the happineſſe of this Kingdome, might be inferr'd unto you, by the reaſon of contraries, from the wofull experience which former times have had of the miſchievous effects of any long intermiſſion of them?

But Mr. *Speaker*, why ſhould we clime higher then the levell wee are on, or thinke further then our owne Horizon, or have recourſe for examples in this buſineſſe, to any other promptuary then our owne memories; nay then the experience almoſt of the youngeſt heere?

The

The reflection backward on the distractions of former times upon intermission of *Parliament*, and the consideration forward of the mischiefes likely still to grow from the same cause if not removed, doubtlesly gave first life and being to those two dormant Statutes of *Edward* the 3*d*, for the yearly holding of *Parliament*: And shall not the fresh and bleeding experience in the present age of miseries from the same spring, not to be paralleld in any other, obtaine a wakening, resurrection for them?

The Intestine distempers Sir, of former ages upon the want of *Parliaments*, may appeare to have had some other cooperative causes, as somtimes, unsuccessefull Warres abroad; somtimes, the absence of the Prince; somtimes, Competitions of Titles to the Crown; somtimes, perhaps the vices of the King himselfe.

But let us but consider the posture, the aspect of this state, both toward it selfe, and the rest of the world, the person of our Soveraigne, and the nature of our sufferings, since the third of his Reigne. And there can be no cause colourably inventable, wherunto to attribute them, but the intermission, or which is worse, the undue frustration of

Parliament, by the unlucky uſe, if not abuſe of Prerogative in the diſſolving them.

Take into your view Gentlemen, a State in a ſtate of the greateſt quiet and ſecurity that can be fancyed, not only injoying the calmeſt peace it ſelfe, but to improve and ſecure its happy condition, all the reſt of the world at the ſame time in Tempeſt, in Combuſtions, in uncompoſable Warres.

Take into your view Sir, a King Soveraigne to three Kingdomes, by a Concentring of all the Royall lynes in his Perſon, as undiſputably as any Mathematicall ones in *Euclide*. A King firme and knowing in his Religion, eminent in vertue; A King that had in his own time given all the Rights and Liberties of his Subjects a more cleare and ample confirmation freely and gratiouſly, then any of his Predeceſſors (when the people had them at advantage) extortedly, I mean in the *Petition of Right*.

This is one Mappe of *England*, Mr *Speaker*, A man Sir, that ſhould preſent unto you now, a Kingdome, groaning under that ſupreme Law, which *Salus populi periclitata* would enact. The liberty, the property of the Subject fundamentally ſubverted, raviſht away by

by the violence of a pretended neceſſity; a triple Crown ſhaking with diſtempers; men of the beſt Conſcience ready to fly into the wilderneſſe for Religion. Would not one ſweare that this were the Antipodes to the other; and yet let me tell you *Mr. Speaker*, this is a Mappe of *England* too, and both at the ſame time true.

As it cannot be denyed Mr. *Speaker*, that ſince the Conqueſt there hath not bin in this Kingdome a fuller concurrence of all circumſtances in the former Caracter, to have made a Kingdome happy, then for theſe 12 yeares laſt paſt; ſo it is moſt certaine, that there hath not bin in all that deduction of ages, ſuch a Conſpiracie, if one may ſo ſay of all the Elements of miſchiefe in the ſecond Caracter, to bring a flouriſhing Kingdome if it were poſſible, to ſwift ruine and deſolation.

I will be bold to ſay, Mr. *Speaker*, and I thanke *God*, we have ſo good a King, under whom we may ſpeak boldly of the abuſe of his power by ill Miniſters, without reflexion upon his perſon.

That an Accumulation of all the publique Grievances ſince *Magna Carta*, one upon

another, unto that houre in which the *Petition* of *Right* paſt into an Act of *Parliament*, would not amount to ſo oppreſſive; I am ſure not to ſo deſtructive a height and magnitude to the rights and property of the Subject, as one branch of our beſlaving ſince the *Petition of Right*.

The branch I meane is the judgement concerning Ship-money. This being a true repreſentation of *England* in both aſpects.

Let him Mr. *Speaker*, that for the unmatcht oppreſſion and enthralling of free Subjects in a time of the beſt Kings raigne, and in memory of the beſt Laws enacting in favour of Subjects liberty., can find a truer Cauſe then the ruptures and intermiſſion of *Parliaments*. Let him, and him alone be againſt the ſetling of this inevitable way for the frequent holding of them.

'Tis true Sir, wicked Miniſters have bin the proximate cauſes of our miſeries, but the want of *Parliaments* the primary, the efficient Cauſe.

Ill Miniſters have made ill times, but that Sir, hath made ill Miniſters.

I have read among the Laws of the Athenians, a forme of recourse in their Oaths and vows of greatest and most publique concernment to a three-fold Deity, *Supplicum Exauditori, Purgatori, Malorum depulsori.*

I doubt not but we here assembled for the Common-wealth in this *Parliament*, shall meet with all these Attributes in our Soveraigne.

I make no question, but he will gratiously heare our Supplications. Purge away our Grievances, and expell Malefactors, that is, remove ill Ministers, and put good in their places.

No lesse can be expected from his wisdome and goodnesse.

But let me tell you Mr. *Speaker*, if we partake not of one Attribute more in him; if we addresse not our selves unto that, I meane *Bonorum Conservatori*; we can have no solid, no durable Comfort in all the rest.

Let his Majesty heare our Complaint never so Compassionatly.

Let him purge away our Grievances never ſo efficaciouſly.

Let him puniſh and diſpell ill Miniſters never ſo exemplarily.

Let him make choyce of good ones never ſo exactly.

If there be not a way ſettled to preſerve and keep them good; the miſchiefes and they will all grow againe like *Sampſons* Locks, and pull down the Houſe upon our heads. Beleeve it Mr. *Speaker*, they will.

It hath bin a Maxime among the wiſeſt Legiſlators, that whoſoever meanes to ſettle good Laws, muſt proceed in them, with a ſiniſter opinion of all Mankind; and ſuppoſe that whoſoever is not wicked, it is for want only of the opportunity. It is that opportunity of being ill Mr. *Speaker*, that we muſt take away, if ever we meane to be happy, which can never be done, but by the frequencie of *Parliaments*.

No State can wiſely be confident of any publique Miniſters continuing good, longer then the Rod is over him.

Let

Let me appeale to all thoſe that were preſent in this Houſe at the agitation of the *Petition* of *Right*. And let them tell themſelves truly, of whoſe promotion to the management of affaires doe they think the generality would at that time have had better hopes then of Mr. *Noy*, and Sir *Thomas Wentworth*, both having bin at that time, and in that buſineſſe as I have heard, moſt keen and active Patriots, and the later of them to the eternall aggravation of his Infamous treachery to the Common-wealth be it ſpoken, the firſt mover, and inſiſter to have this clauſe added to the *Petition* of *Right*, that for the comfort and ſafety of his Subjects, his Majeſtie would be pleaſed to declare his will and pleaſure, that all his Miniſters ſhould ſerve him according to the Laws and Statutes of the Realme.

And yet Mr. *Speaker*, to whom now can all the inundations upon our liberties under pretence of Law, and the late ſhipwrack at once of all our propertie, be attributed more then to *Noy*, and thoſe, and all other miſchiefes whereby this Monarchy hath bin brought almoſt to the brinke of deſtruction, ſo much to any as to that Grand Apoſtate to the Common-wealth, the now Lievtenant of *Ireland*?

The

The first I hope *God* hath forgiven in the other world; and the later must not hope to be pardoned it in this, till he be dispatcht to the other.

Let every man but consider those men as once they were.

The excellent Law for the security of the Subject enacted immediatly before their coming to imployment, in the contriving whereof themselves were principall Actors.

The goodnesse and vertue of the King they served, and yet the high and publique oppressions that in his time they have wrought. And surely there is no man but will conclude with me, that as the deficience of *Parliament* hath bin the *Causa Causarum* of all the mischiefes and distempers of the present times: so the frequencie of them is the sole Catholique Antidote that can preserve and secure the future from the like.

Mr. *Speaker*, let me yet draw my Discourse a little nearer to his Majesty himselfe, and tell you, that the frequencie of *Parliament* is most essentially necessary to the power, the security, the glory of the King.

There

There are two wayes Mr. *Speaker*, of powerfull Rule, either by Feare, or Love, but one of happy and safe Rule, that is, by Love, that *firmissimum Imperium quo obedientes gaudent.*

To which *Camillus* advised the Romans. Let a Prince consider what it is that moves a people principally to affection, and dearnesse, towards their Soveraigne, He shall see that there needs no other Artifice in it, then to let them injoy unmolestedly, what belongs unto them of right; If that have bin invaded and violated in any kind, whereby affections are alienated, the next consideration for a wise Prince that would be happy, is how to regaine them, to which three things are equally necessary.

Reinstating them in their former liberty.

Revenging them of the Authors of those violations.

And securing them from Apprehensions of the like againe.

The first *God* be thanked, we are in a good way of.

The second in warme pursuit of.

But the third as essentiall as all the rest, till we be certaine of triennial *Parliament*, at the least; I professe I can have but cold hopes of.

I beseech you then *Gentlemen*, since that security for the future is so necessary to that blessed union of affections, and this Bill so necessary to that security.

Let us not be so wanting to our selves; let us not be so wanting to our Soveraigne, as to forbeare to offer unto him, this powerfull, this everlasting Philter to Charme unto him the hearts of his people, whose vertue can never evaporate.

There is no man Mr. *Speaker*, so secure of anothers friendship, but will thinke frequent intercourse and accesse very requisite to the support, to the Confirmation of it: Especially if ill offices have bin done between them; if the raysing of jealousies hath bin attempted.

There is no Friend but would be impatient to be debarred from giving his Friend succour and relieefe in his necessities.

Mr.

Mr. *Speaker*, permit me the compariſon of great things with little, what friendſhip, what union can there be ſo comfortable, ſo happy, as between a gracious Soveraigne and his people, and what greater misfortune can there be to both, then for them to be kept from intercourſe, from the meanes of clearing miſunderſtandings from interchange of mutuall benefits.

The people of *England* Sir, cannot open their Eares, their Hearts, their Mouthes, nor their Purſes, to his Majeſtie, but in *Parliament*.

We can neither heare him, nor complain, nor acknowledge, nor give, but there.

This Bill Sir, is the ſole Key that can open the way to a frequencie of thoſe reciprocall endeerments, which muſt make and perpetuate the happineſſe of the King and Kingdome.

Let no man object any derogation from the Kings Prerogative by it. We doe but preſent the Bill, 'tis to be made a Law by

him, his honour, his power, will be as conſpicuous, in commanding at once that *Parliament* ſhall aſſemble every third yeare, as in commanding a *Parliament* to be called this or that yeare: there is more of Majeſtie in ordaining primary and univerſall Cauſes, then in the actuating particularly of ſubordinate effects.

I doubt not but that glorious King *Edward* the third, when he made thoſe Laws for the yearly Calling of *Parliament*, did it with a right ſence of his dignity, and honour.

The truth is Sir, the Kings of *England* are never in their glory, in their ſplendor, in their Majeſtique Soveraignty, but in *Parliaments*.

Where is the power of impoſing Taxes? Where is the power of reſtoring from incapacites? Where is the legiſlative Authority? Marry in the King, Mr. *Speaker*. But how? in the King circled in, fortified and evirtuated by his *Parliament*.

The King out of *Parliament* hath a limitted, a circumſcribed Jurisdiction. But wayted on by his *Parliament*, no Monarch of the Eaſt is ſo abſolute in diſpelling Grievances.

Mr.

Mr. *Speaker*, in chasing ill Ministers, we doe but dissipate Clouds that may gather againe, but in voting this Bill, we shall contribute, as much as in us lyes to the perpetuating our Sun, our Soveraigne, in his vesticall in his noon day lustre.

FINIS.

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